



News Release

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MultiCare Tacoma General and Mary Bridge Hospitals Receive Award

Saving hearts one newborn at a time with pioneering testing

OLYMPIA — Today Washington State Secretary of Health Mary Selecky presented the Warren Featherstone Reid Award to MultiCare Tacoma General Hospital and Mary Bridge Pediatric Heart Center in Tacoma for their pioneering work screening newborns for heart defects.

Since 2008, Tacoma General has screened more than 7,000 day-old babies with a painless test that measures oxygen in the blood. Called pulse oximetry, the test diagnoses heart defects so they can be treated early at the Mary Bridge Pediatric Heart Center. Undetected heart defects are a leading cause of infant deaths. The hospitals share a campus in Tacoma.

“This test has found defects that can be fixed in two dozen tiny hearts, and saved countless families from heartache,” Secretary of Health Mary Selecky said. “MultiCare’s pioneering program sets the stage for a federal recommendation that the test be used in every hospital.”

“Our newborns are showing why this test could soon be saving young lives at other hospitals,” said Shelly Mullin, vice president and administrator of MultiCare Tacoma General Hospital.

“Mothers who give birth at our Family Birth Center find comfort in knowing their babies have been screened for heart defects before they go home from the hospital. We’re honored that our work fulfills the spirit of this award.”

The award honors health care providers and facilities for exceptional quality and value in the delivery of health services. It is named for a longtime Senate staff member, known to most as “Feather.” Reid worked for U.S. Senator Warren Magnuson for years, promoting better health policies. Among many other policies and projects, he helped start the Medicare and Medicaid programs. After his Senate staff career, he chaired the Washington State Board of Health. The award in his name was established by the 1994 Legislature.

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